A String of Pearls.

BY ELIZA F. POLLARD, AUTHOR OF "ROGER THE RANGER," ETC

"She sat down beside him and began modelling a dog." *p.* 162.

CHAPTER IX.

NOEL'S NEW FRIEND.

SHOUTS of merry laughter proceeded from the small orchard at the back of Toll Cottage.

"Higher, Jack, higher," shouted Noel, as he sat astride a see-saw, at the other end of which was a lad somewhat older than himself.

It was a lovely spring afternoon—the sunlight was gleaming through the branches of the budding apple-trees, the air was soft yet fresh with the subtle mingled perfume of sea and land.

The boys were in wild spirits, especially Noel, who, tossing back his curly brown hair, shouted with glee.

"Look out!" cried Jack, suddenly; "I'm going off;" and suiting the action to the word, either careless or ignorant of the inevitable consequence, the boy slipped off as the plank touched the ground, and Noel, losing his balance, was thrown with some violence.

Sarah happening to come out to call him in to tea, saw the accident, and was in a second beside him. Lifting him up, she carried him into the house.

"I'm all right," said the boy, after a few seconds, to her great relief. He was very white, and lay quite still in her arms.

"Bring some water, mother," Sarah called to old Mrs. Colley. "And do you run as fast as your legs can carry you for the doctor," she said to Jack, who, frightened, stood at the kitchen door.

"I'm mighty sorry," he whispered. "I meant no harm. I told him to hold on," answered Jack.

"Be off with you," said Sarah.

Jack waited no second bidding, but tore off to Barston. He was a fisherman's son, and he and Noel were great chums, especially since Marjory had gone away.

"I'm not hurt," said Noel, and he moved to get out of her arms. A faint cry escaped him. "It's my back," he said.

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"An operation will be necessary—at least, that is my opinion; and then with care he will be as well as ever. But I should like you to go up to London for advice," said old Dr. Markham that same evening, after a careful examination of the child, who continued to complain of his back, and could not stand.

"You had better go to-morrow. I will telegraph up to my nephew Hugh, one of the house surgeons at St. George's; he will meet you at the station and take you to respectable lodgings. Queenie will be home in a month; we must have you running about by that time,' he added, patting Noel on the head.

The brother and sister were great favourites of the old gentleman; he considered that, next to Sarah, Noel owed to him his life, and he never passed the cottage without looking in.

"Must I send for Queenie?" asked Sarah.

"No! What business had she ever to go on that wild

goose chase? Let her stay at school; didn't you tell me she was set on passing some examination?" said the Doctor, gruffly.

"Yes," answered Sarah; "but if there is any danger for Noel she would not hesitate to come home."

"I do not think there is any danger, but if there is, Hugh will tell you, and it will be time enough to send for her then."

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"It will probably be only for a week or ten days, Mrs. Marshall," said Hugh Markham; "the boy is an especial favourite of my uncle's. I have often seen him—a jolly little chap. You must take them in."

"Well, Mr. Markham, if it were anybody else I'd say no at once, I don't like sick folk and operations, no more do my first-floor lodgers; but as you make such a point of it, I suppose I must take them in," said Rebecca Marshall.

"There's a good soul," said the young doctor. "I expect them by the 4.30, and I shall bring them round myself. By the by, who's that beautiful girl I met as I came in—a lodger, too?"

"No, not exactly; she's a young lady in my care," answered Rebecca, somewhat stiffly.

"Then you had better beware of thieves and robbers, Mrs. Marshall, for she's pretty well the handsomest girl I've set my eyes on," said Hugh, laughing; and with a cheery "Good day, and thank you," he took his hat and went his way.

"He's right, there," said Mrs. Marshall, "and somehow I can't make her out; it's not natural that a girl like her should be content to live with 'Enry and me, never caring to go out except just to give her French lessons! I don't let her carry her work backwards and forwards, because, whoever her pa was, her mother was a lady, and who knows what may happen some day! Just listen to her a-singing; it's like having a bird in the house," and she went downstairs to a little sitting-room close by the kitchen.

At a table drawn up to the window sat Thirza, busy with silks and gauzes and flowers. She stopped singing, and looking up brightly, said,

"Well, a new lodger?"

"Not one, but two," answered Mrs. Marshall. "That young man's a doctor; he lodged here when he was a medical student, and two or three times I've taken patients for him. This time he's sending me a little boy with his nurse."

"He knows how good and kind you are," said Thirza, smiling. "Doctors are wise men!"

"My dear, won't you put your work down and go out? it's such a lovely spring day."

"I have three orders for to-day and to-morrow, I have no time," answered Thirza. "Do not trouble about me, I am quite happy;" but even as she spoke her brow clouded.

"Well, I must go and get those rooms ready," said Mrs. Marshall, rising.

"I'll come and help you," exclaimed Thirza, jumping up.

"You're always ready to help everybody," retorted Mrs. Marshall.

"It does me good, and then it is for a little child—I'm so fond of children," said the girl.

"I wonder what you are not fond of?" replied Mrs. Marshall, smiling kindly. "As 'Enry says, you're just like a sunbeam; the house ain't the same since you came."

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Noel was by no means a model patient; he had lived so much in the open air that confinement was irksome to him, and the fact that he could not move about, though he suffered no great pain, made him irritable, and poor Sarah's patience was tried to the uttermost. Upon examination the doctors declared a slight operation necessary, but what was even of greater importance was, that afterwards he should be kept immovable for a week or ten days. "If you can do this," the physician said to Sarah, "then he will feel no after effects of the accident."

"I shall be obliged to send for his sister, I cannot manage him alone," Sarah declared that same evening to Mrs. Marshall. "It's a terrible pity, she been working hard to pass some examinations, which come off in a fortnight; she'll be terribly disappointed. I've not even told her of the accident, because the doctor assured me there was no danger."

"Mr. Markham says he'll be all right if you can keep him still," said Mrs. Marshall. "I shouldn't disturb the young lady if she's set upon passing them examinations; young people are mad on that sort of thing in these days. Surely we can manage the little lad between us?"

But Sarah shook her head, saying, "He's just like a flea, never still a moment."

"Oh, there's my Thirza, she's longing to see him, and I'll be bound she'll manage him if no one else can; she's out now, but when she comes in I'll send her up."

"What a curious name! Is she your daughter?" asked Sarah.

"No, she's the child of my old mistress, who died abroad; her father got through all the money, and she was unhappy with his people, so she's just biding with me, and 'Enry and me we love her, she's that bright."

Next day Thirza knocked at the dining-room door. She carried in her hand a big bunch of violets.

"Mrs. Marshall has sent me to see the little boy," she said.

"Come in, miss," said Sarah. "He's just so fretful, I'm at my wits' end."

Noel lay in bed, his handsome little face flushed, his brown curls all tumbled.

"I want Queenie," he was crying, "and Sarah won't send for her—oh, what sweet violets!" and he held out his hands for the flowers.

Thirza gave them to him, and the boy, looking at her steadily, said, "Have you come to play with me?"

"If you will let me," answered Thirza.

"I can't play, for I must not move," said Noel, fretfully.

"So I hear," answered Thirza; "but I have brought this," and she showed him a lump of white wax, soft and malleable. "My father was a sculptor, and when I was a little girl I learnt to model. Shall I show you?" and without waiting for an answer, she sat down beside him and began modelling a dog.

It was something so new Noel was delighted, and from that hour they were fast friends. He had very

clever fingers, and, lying on his back, copied Thirza's models with astonishing accuracy.

"You'll be an artist," said Thirza, a day or two later.

"Shall I?" said Noel, delighted; "I wonder whether Queenie would like that for me?" And then followed a long explanation of who Queenie was, where she was, and what she was doing; and that night Mrs. Marshall was troubled because Thirza complained of a headache and did not come down to supper.

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CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE VISIT.

"YOU promised me, if I passed, you would come home with me and see my mother and aunt; you will not disappoint me, I owe everything to you—at least you will let them thank you," and Léonie Carrel, terribly excited, caught hold of Marjory's hands and kissed them.

"Oh, don't, Léonie, don't," exclaimed Marjory. "If Madame will let me I will go home with you; though, indeed, if you have passed it is not my doing, you have worked wonderfully."

The examinations were over, Marjory had come off high on the lists, and had moreover been complimented by the examiners. Léonie was less brilliant, but still she *had* passed, and that was more than anyone had expected.

Madame Lambert was both proud and satisfied; they had done credit to her institution. So when Marjory went to her with the request that she might go with Léonie to announce the result to her relatives, she gave permission, only adding,

"I warn you they are not of the same social position as yourself, but Léonie's mother is an honest woman, and must be very grateful to you, therefore you will not mind for once."

"I shall not mind at all if I can make them happy," answered Marjory; and so the two girls were seen into a *fiacre* immediately after the late *déjeuner*.

The *fiacre* drew up before the shabby house in the shabby street, and in a few seconds the girls were crossing the courtyard. Mère Claude was, as usual, standing at the door of her lodge, and called after Léonie, "Well, what luck, *petite?*"

"Passed," answered Léonie, triumphantly, and hurried up the old rickety stairs, pulled the bell-rope, and then for a few minutes Marjory was overwhelmed,—what between tears and laughter, frantic embraces and reiterated blessings, she hardly knew where she was.

"Come in, my children, come in," said Madame Charles. "I knew my cards would prove true, and so I insisted on preparing a feast for you; *she* was not half so sure of her prayers," she added, pointing to Léonie's mother.

"You see, aunt, this is the fair girl you told me of," said Léonie, as they emerged out of the dark, narrow passage into the small sitting-room, where a sumptuous repast of cakes and coffee was laid out.

"Of course," said Madame Charles; "was I ever mistaken? You must let me tell you your fortune presently, when you have refreshed yourself," she said, nodding at Marjory.

Léonie clapped her hands. "Ah, that is why I have brought her here; she ought to be rich, only someone has stolen the will and a string of pearls."

With difficulty Madame Charles checked an ejaculation of surprise; she could not prevent a startled look coming into her eyes, but immediately bent them on the ground, saying, "A will! a string of pearls! that is strange. Well, we must try and find them; now enjoy yourselves," and she pushed a pile of cakes towards Marjory.

Léonie's mother, a sickly, overworked-looking woman, put her hand kindly on Marjory's shoulder, saying,

"You have been very good to my Léonie, it will surely bring you luck. I do not like the cards because I believe in the good God, but I will pray for you, and some day you will find the will and be a rich, happy young lady, and you will not forget my Léonie."

"If only Thirza had been here I should have been quite happy," said Léonie. "Have you heard of her, my aunt?"

"No, not a word. Do not speak to me about her, it breaks my heart," and she covered her face with her hands and rocked herself to and fro as if in deep grief.

Marjory thought she had never seen such a strange figure. "Was your Thirza a model?" she asked, "and did she sit for Monsieur Harcroft and Monsieur Philip?"

"She was a model; she had a beautiful head, and might have made a fortune, but she did not like the work and so ran away. Yet what was easier than just to sit still and be looked at?" said Madame Charles, indignantly, "but she was wilful."

"Perhaps she ran away for another reason," thought Marjory. "I am sure she knew something of my pearls; I will tell Philip."

Madame Charles, watching her, knew that she suspected something, and taking out her pack of cards laid them on the table, saying, "I will tell you where your pearls are."

She shuffled the pack and laid the cards out with the greatest care, after making Marjory cut them several times.

"There are a great many people concerned in the business," she said; "it is difficult to unravel. A fair gentleman—he is young—and an old gentleman, a lawyer, the police, a little child; oh, yes, there is a little child who has great influence. You will have no trouble, only be patient; they will come back to you quite suddenly when you least expect it. The paper you seek and the pearls are at the bottom of a black box."

"Well, I hope they are, and that I *shall* find them," said Marjory, rising, "but you know I do not believe a word about your cards. If *you* are satisfied, Léonie, we must be going; Madame said we were to be in by seven for dinner."

"I am ready," said Léonie. "Good-bye, mother; good-bye, aunt."

"Wait, my children, I will put you into a *fiacre*," said Madame Carrel. Marjory took leave of Madame Charles almost frigidly. The woman inspired her with a feeling of intense dislike.

When they were in the cab, Léonie said, "You will find out some day that she has told you the truth."

"Possibly. In the meantime I would rather not think about it," answered Marjory.

Nevertheless that night she lay awake pondering. She could not sleep; the more she thought the matter over the more she was persuaded that both that wicked-looking Madame Charles and the girl Thirza knew what had become of the heritage which she so longed to possess, and a feeling of bitterness took possession of her. It seemed to her as if everyone, even Philip Fleming, were in league to defraud her of her rights.

"I will speak to him to-morrow, and if he will not take the matter up, I will see Mr. Dobson as soon as I get home. It is not for myself I care so much, but for Noel." And with that she dropped asleep.

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"I am very sorry, Madame, but I must go home at once," said Marjory, standing before Madame Lambert in her private room, and twisting a letter nervously in her hand. "You see he is in London and has had an operation, and Sarah never told me because of my examination; she knew quite well I would have left all the examinations to go to my brother."

"It is awkward for me," said Madame Lambert.

"I am sorry," said Marjory. "You have been very good to me, and it seems ungrateful to leave you so suddenly; but I have no one else in the world only my brother Noel—I must go to him. I have spoken to Miss Curtis. She has promised to take the English classes, so everything will go on just as usual."

"Except that you are such a favourite,—the pupils will miss you," said Madame; "but I understand you must go." And so the matter was settled.

Léonie went about weeping bitterly, and would not lose sight of her friend.

The following day Marjory went down to the hotel to take leave of her friends there, and the hostess at her request sent word to Philip. When he arrived, abruptly, without any warning, she asked, looking steadily at him,

"Did you know that Thirza, the model who saw the pearls and the will, has run away, and it is thought she is in England?"

"Who told you?" said Philip, colouring.

"Never mind who told me," replied Marjory, "did you know it?"

"I knew she had left Paris," answered Philip.

"And you still believe her to be innocent?"

"I do," said Philip, firmly.

"Then listen," said Marjory, and rapidly she told of her interview with Madame Charles.

"It is curious," said Philip. "The police have kept a strict watch on all the models, their houses and premises have been overhauled, and nothing has been found; the will, of course, has no value for those people and has certainly been destroyed, but the pearls could not have been so easily disposed of, yet every pawnbroker's shop has passed under revision without success."

"My belief is that girl has them," said Marjory.

"And I would pledge my honour she has not," answered Philip. Marjory could not help noticing how every particle of colour had left his face.

"I wonder whether he cares for her?" she thought. There was no feeling of jealousy, love had not entered Marjory's soul—at least, *that* sort of love; she and Philip were good friends, he had made her stay in Paris very pleasant to her, and he liked the fresh English girl and was more especially sorry for her disappointment; but no warmer feeling than friendship had arisen in either of their hearts.

At the present moment Philip Fleming felt somewhat angry with Marjory for her persistent suspicion of Thirza. He had been greatly annoyed by the sudden disappearance of the girl, and had tried by every means in his power to discover where she had gone. Ever since he had occupied the studio adjoining Mr. Harcroft's he had been accustomed to see Thirza almost daily; she had sat for him also, and her brightness, her winsome, modest ways had formed a pleasant contrast to others of her class. He had never seen or heard her say an unseemly word or do a bold deed. And he knew she was the same wherever she posed. If anyone offended Thirza by undue freedom of manner, she obstinately refused to return to that studio, and no offer, no entreaties could move her. She had been thus from a mere child, and as she was a quiet sitter, and her beauty was of no common order, she carried the day, and like Una, Thirza passed unharmed and respected, smiling and fearless, through the crowd. Not for one moment could Philip entertain the idea that such a girl could be a common thief.

The day after his conversation with Marjory he was at the Gare du Nord to see her off. Léonie was also there, weeping copiously.

"You will find me a little place," she said as she embraced Marjory. "I will do anything to be near you, you are my good angel; do not forget your Léonie."

"No, I will not forget you," answered Marjory.

"Good-bye, Mr. Fleming. I am going away as poor as I came," she added sadly.

"I am sorry," said Philip, "but you must not give up all hope."

Marjory shook her head. "It is better I should," she answered, and the train steamed out of the station, carrying her home, half glad, half sorry.

"Have you heard anything of Thirza?" Philip asked Léonie, as they left the station together.

"No, she is lost," was the short answer. "Good-bye, Mr. Philip," and she went her way.

"Lost," repeated Philip, "dropped out of the world, because no one cares to seek her. Poor Thirza!"

"A telegram, Monsieur, just arrived," said the *concierge*, coming out of the lodge as Philip was passing to his studio, and handing him the blue paper.

He took it carelessly, opened it as he went up the stairs, pausing on the first landing to read it:

"Meet the early train from Dieppe to-morrow morning, Gare St. Lazare. THIRZA."

"I most certainly will," said Philip, joyously.

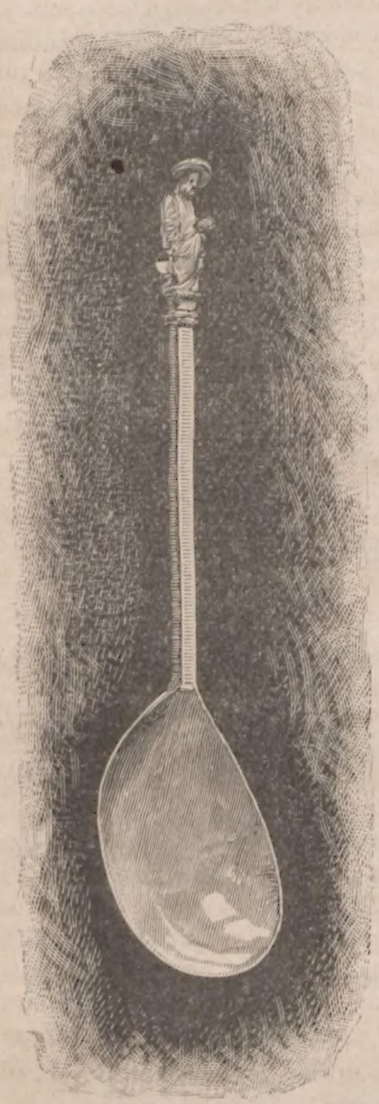
(*To be concluded.*)

A Good Comparison.—Thelwall once said to Coleridge: "I think it is unfair to influence the minds of children by inculcating opinions before they come to years of discretion so that they may choose for themselves."

Coleridge made no reply, but asked his friend to visit his garden. When there, he said, "This is my botanical garden." "How can that be," asked Thelwall, "for it is all overgrown with weeds?" "Oh," said Coleridge, "that is only because my garden has not come to the age of discretion. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair to prejudice the soil in favour of roses, berries, and delicious fruits."

CURIOUS CHRISTENING CUSTOMS.

BY CLARA G. LEWIS.



An Apostle Spoon.

IT cannot be said that our interest nowadays in a christening is at all to be compared with that which marked the conduct of our forebears. Still, the interesting ceremony, and the peculiar customs associated with it, will always have a fascination for mothers.

Strange as it may seem, our christening customs come down to us from the remote days of antiquity. Both the Greeks and the Romans celebrated a particular feast on which a child was publicly named (usually on the fifth day after birth), in the presence of its relatives, who bestowed gifts upon it. Then among the Celtic, Scandinavian, and other rude peoples of the West, the nomination always took place in connection with water for superstitious reasons. For example, an apt passage from Odin has it that, "If I will that a man should neither fall in battle nor perish by the sword, I sprinkle him over with water at the instant of his birth."

From the earliest times the use of water has been looked upon, in the East, as a symbolical purifier of the soul; therefore it was little wonder that the same symbol should have been employed for the reception and naming of converts to the New Religion.

The Anglo-Saxon baptisteries were really sumptuous edifices, always adjoining the churches, and adorned with various pictures of Christ being baptised by John, etc. The font occupied a central platform of stone; save in some earlier examples, where it was simply a bath or basin, to which it was necessary to descend by several steps. In the latter instance children were dipped by the sponsors, who also stood in the water; in the former they were merely held over and plunged in. It was usual to keep these fonts and basins locked up, to preserve the water from being abstracted by people who held it to be efficacious in curing diseases, as also from a superstitious fear of sorcery.

Eastertide and Pentecost were the recognised seasons for christening. During Lent no christenings were permitted whatever, except when a child was in imminent danger of dying without the sacrament. It was not until the year 1100, in the reign of William II., that this prohibition was finally abolished. Anglo-Saxon children who remained unbaptised received the name of *Pagania*, or pagans, and were refused Christian burial when they died.

Male infants, when carried to the font, were held in the right arm of the godfather; females, in that of the godmother. Prior to the christening, a child was clothed in white for eight days, and brought to the church each day. The ceremony always took place on the Sabbath. The *chrysome*, or face-cloth, which was put upon it by the priest, was expected to be worn until the mother's churching seven days afterwards. If the child died during that time it was buried in it; but otherwise it became the perquisite of the priest at the churching.

According to the English Liturgy compiled by Cranmer and Ridley in the reign of Edward VI., a child was required to be dipped in the font three distinct times—first on the right side, secondly on the left, and lastly with the face towards the water.

Formerly godfathers bestowed their own surnames upon their godchildren at the font. In the sixteenth century it was usual for sponsors to provide their godchildren with *christening shirts*, to be worn at their baptism. These are described by Howes, writing in 1631, as "with little bands and cuffs wrought with silk or blue thread, the best of them for chiefe persons' weare, edged with a small lace of blacke silke and gold, the highest price of which for great men's children was

A Scottish Superstition.

seldom above a noble, and the common sort two, three, or foure and five shillings apiece."

By the middle of the seventeenth century presents of cups, bowls, and gilt spoons took the place of the christening shirts. The last bore the name of Apostle Spoons, from the figures of the apostles that were carved or chased on the tops of the handles. Wealthy sponsors gave the entire twelve; but persons in middling circumstances were expected to give four, three, or one, according to their position. Where a single spoon was offered, care was taken that it represented the particular apostle after whom the child was named.

A curious practice, which even yet survives in the more remote portions of Scotland, is thus described by Dr. Moresni: "They take," says he, "on their return from church the newly-baptised infant, and vibrate it three or four times gently over a flame, saying, and repeating it thrice, 'Let the flame consume thee now or never.'" This superstition is of ancient date, finding its origin in an Athenian practice, when the gossips ran round the fire with the infant in their arms to ward off evil spirits; after which they fell to feasting and rejoicing until the close of the day.

It may not be generally known that in certain retired districts in the north it is still the good old custom, whenever a christening takes place among the poorer orders, for a collection to be made by the guests to defray the cost, not only of the christening, but also of the entertainment. In the Isle of Man this practice is somewhat modified by each guest paying for his own share of the day's enjoyment; while presents to the little one are considered correct.

AMMONIA, AND SOME OF ITS USES.

BY LINA ORMAN COOPER, AUTHOR OF "WE WIVES."

N a pint bottle of ammonia every housewife possesses a universal cleanser. The uses to which this volatile spirit can be put are almost endless. I will just mention half a dozen or so. My readers can make further experiments with it for themselves.

First. That big mirror in the drawing-room—as are the many smaller looking-glasses upstairs—is fringed with a tiny border of fly-blows and finger-marks. A few drops of liquid ammonia sprinkled on a newspaper and rubbed over its face will take away every smear, and leave no smudgy veil behind.

The same combination will brighten window-panes.

Second. Our best electro—even if it be Elkington's A1—is apt to be dull after Mary Jane's attentions. Keep a small wooden bowl in your store pantry, and, after using the silver, dip it therein. Of course, you have previously put a pint of hot water from the breakfast or tea kettle into the basin, and a teaspoonful of the spirit. A slight shake of your forks and spoons, a hasty drying on a clean rubber, a small polish with Selvyt or chamois leather, will leave the silver burnished brightly, with an almost infinitesimal amount of labour. Less than five minutes' work after each meal would keep the contents of your baize-covered silver basket in perfect condition.

Third. My lady's new silk dress has received an unwelcome spot of grease just in the front gore. Never mind. Put on a drop of the pure spirit, cover with a piece of clean blotting-paper, and press with a hot iron for a few minutes. Exit the spot!

Fourth. Seraphina, for the first time since her marriage, notes that her ivory hair-brushes are looking a little dingy. Now, many Seraphinas have no maid. If they had, ten to one those initialled dainty brushes would "yell" only too soon from being immersed in suds and boiling water. So I would advise every bride to undertake the cleansing thereof herself.

To every pint of W-A-R-M (in capital letters please, Mr. Printer), or even *cold* water, add one teaspoonful of ammonia. Avoid anything boiling. Dab your brushes gently in the mixture, rinse out quickly, shake vigorously, and put in the sunshine to dry. Place them bristles *downwards* on window-sill or frame, so that they may drain away from the ivory.

Brushes and *combs* thus treated will last indefinitely, and be always a credit to their owner.

Fifth. It is the housekeeper's "field day," or general "clear-up." Here steps in our friendly spirit.

The paint on window-ledge and cornice-pole emerges bright and shining from a simple application. Only a soft flannel wetted in a liquid composed of a quart of warm suds and a teaspoonful of ammonia is needed. Try for yourselves. Dust, fly-specks, grime, and smoke all flee away as if by magic. They are not driven out with much labour, or much application of elbow-grease. The latent energy stored in our volatile friend can do without any such animal aids.

Sixth. Dyspepsia often attacks the members of the best regulated of families, even when every attention is paid to diet and hygiene. For it, and heartburn, drink a wineglassful of water mixed with ten drops of ammonia. It is a safe and speedy remedy.

Seventh. Roses, geraniums, fuchsias, etc., have a sad habit of blossoming themselves out in a few days; or maybe the poor stunted, feeble things altogether refuse to bloom.

In order to keep them in a flourishing state, sprinkle them with five or six drops of ammonia added to every quart of water. This will stimulate highly—*too* highly unless used in moderation. The dose should not be repeated more often than once a week. You will be surprised at the bloom in porch and in frame if my directions are followed.

Eighth. One is often in a difficulty for rain-water in which to wash our own or our children's curls. Yet even *hard*, lime-y, pump stuff may be used, if softened with an egg-spoonful of ammonia to every quart of warm water. More than this will make the hair brittle and apt to crack.

I need not repeat the uses of ammonia in our Home Laundry (see MOTHERS' COMPANION for 1894). Without its aid our flannels would shrink, our silks discolour, our laces fray, and our collars cut. It is, indeed, a universal solvent, and is a veritable boon and blessing to overworked women.

"ME WAS SO GOOD!"

THE merit of desert, the claims of right behaviour to certain rewards and privileges not indiscriminately accorded to all, is so deeply rooted a sentiment in human nature that one cannot but believe that it is founded upon the law of justice itself; it is recognised, and even, under certain conditions, encouraged in the Divine code of morals, and its influence is generally for good.

But it is quite possible to allow the idea a too important place in our regard, to the exclusion of certain truths that demand equal consideration. This fact was brought before our notice in a rather odd way some little time ago, and the preacher was a three-year-old maiden; or, more accurately, this mite gave out the text in the words quoted above, and we fitted thereto our own sermon.

We were travelling in a railway train, and meditating somewhat sadly meanwhile on the lot of a dear friend, about whose path troubles seemed ever thickening, though to outward seeming the beauty of her Christian character should have brought down upon her the brightest of heaven's blessings.

All at once we became aware of an argument going on behind us between a small fellow-passenger and the individual in charge of her. Evidently the small person desired to immediately have and enjoy some dainty, the consumption of which would imperil the spotlessness of her attire, for, in reply to low-toned remonstrances, the little voice reiterated with the deliberation and monotony of a talking doll, "Me—won't—mess—my—coat! Me—won't—mess—my—coat!"

This having gone on for some minutes without producing any effect on little missie's custodian, she burst into a torrent of tears and sobs, wailing out, until grief choked her utterance, "Me—was—*so*—good! Me—was—*so*—good!" in accents which showed that a deep sense of wrong, no less than disappointed desire, was wringing her baby soul.

Possibly, some well-meaning but injudicious person had taught the little creature that if she were only "good" she might reasonably expect to have every wish gratified, thus sowing the seeds of that common error into which the writer herself had a few minutes before been falling.

Why should the baby-girl be allowed to soil and spoil her pretty pelisse simply because, in her little way, she had been trying to win the approval of the one in charge? And why should we suppose that a child of God is to have every unwise desire fulfilled, every salutary trial averted, because he or she is sincerely striving to lead a Christian life? The sooner we get rid of the notion that the approval of God means having most things our own way, the happier we shall be and the less subject to the shaking and jarring of our faith by what looks like unmerited adversity.

The wise mother, too, will early teach her little ones that what is *best* for them she will always do, patiently and unfailingly, whether they are good or naughty. Of course, the best thing for the naughty child must sometimes be less pleasant than the best for the sweet and obedient one—and we know also for ourselves that "the blessing of the Lord maketh rich"—but to allow the good things of life, even for a child, to bear too close and unfailing a proportion to the exact quality of the child's behaviour, as some parents do, is to encourage a commercial spirit, ugly in itself, and leading to wrong views of the great Father's government of the world. The boy with whom his mother is most pleased must occasionally have his wishes crossed for his own truest welfare, while the judicious bestowal of "uncovenanted mercies" may sometimes appeal more effectively to the better nature of the unruly lad than a systematic course of deprivation.

God, who chastens those whom He loves, also sends His rain, we are told, upon the unjust as well as upon the just. If we could always remember this, we should be less likely to wail, Job-like, with a bitter sense of wronged integrity, when things go sadly with us, we having, to our own minds, been "*so* good!" JACEY.

OUR NEW MAGAZINE.

JUST one further word about our new magazine. The first number of THE OSBORNE is now on sale everywhere, and can be obtained from any bookseller. For threepence it offers all the attractions of the best sixpenny magazines, besides various unique special features of its own.

A few years ago it would have been impossible to obtain, even for sixpence, such an abundance of delightfully interesting stories, and articles, and pictures as will be found in the pages of THE OSBORNE. We claim to know something of past and present serial literature, and we say without hesitation that a better magazine than THE OSBORNE has never been produced. We will go further, and say that we doubt very much whether it has ever hitherto been possible to obtain such a selection of the very best of literary and pictorial art in exchange for the smallest silver coin of the realm.

Get a copy of the magazine and judge for yourself. We believe you will admit that you never expended a threepenny piece to better advantage.

Your Son.—You want him to be a man. It does not make so much difference whether he is a "gentleman," so called, or not. But a man is a man the world over. The model of your boy's life you will help him to find in the manhood of the New Testament. Meekness of spirit, noble aspirations, a merciful disposition, purity of heart, cleanliness of thought, chastity, right conduct, moderation in speech, generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness of wrongs, modesty, loyalty to duty, charity in judgment, practical wisdom—all these he will find in the Sermon on the Mount. All the cardinal principles, the sure foundations, upon which pure, true manhood is builded, he will find in the teachings and model of the New Testament. There is no other standard, no other model of faultless manhood.—*Robert J. Burdette.*

SOMETHING ABOUT SALT.

BY C. J. HAMILTON, AUTHOR OF "A PEEP AT THE LINEN TRADE," ETC.

A Furnace Stoker.

THERE is no article on our dinner and breakfast tables more necessary than salt. It is so common that we do not prize it much. But what should we do without it? It is used in the cottage as well as in the palace—a dish of Irish stew would be very unsavoury without a good spoonful of salt, and then it is so cheap that we can all afford to buy it. It has been used from the earliest ages, and is most necessary to health, keeping the blood pure, and warding off disease.

We read that in the time of Moses all the sacrifices had to be seasoned with salt. "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Leviticus ii. 13). Salt was here used as an emblem of purity. Our Lord asks His disciples, "If the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" or wherewith shall we get anything to give us the savour which we expect to find in salt? St. Paul, too, writing to the Colossians, tells them that their speech should be seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6). Besides the savouriness of salt, it acts as a preservative—it has the property of keeping things from corruption. We should always bear in mind that Christians are the salt of the earth, keeping the world from corruption and evil. Whenever we want to preserve anything we put salt to it. Bacon, ham, herrings, pickled meats of all kinds could not be preserved without being covered, or steeped, in strong salt brine. In France a tax was put on salt by one of the kings, which was called the Gabelle, and very heavily did it weigh on the poor people. Even now there is in Russia a heavy tax on salt, so that it becomes a costly luxury to the peasants.

The customs which cluster round the practice of salt-using are as interesting as they are numerous. For instance, when Prince Ferdinand, of Bulgaria, entered his principality he several times went through the Eastern custom of eating salt on the threshold.

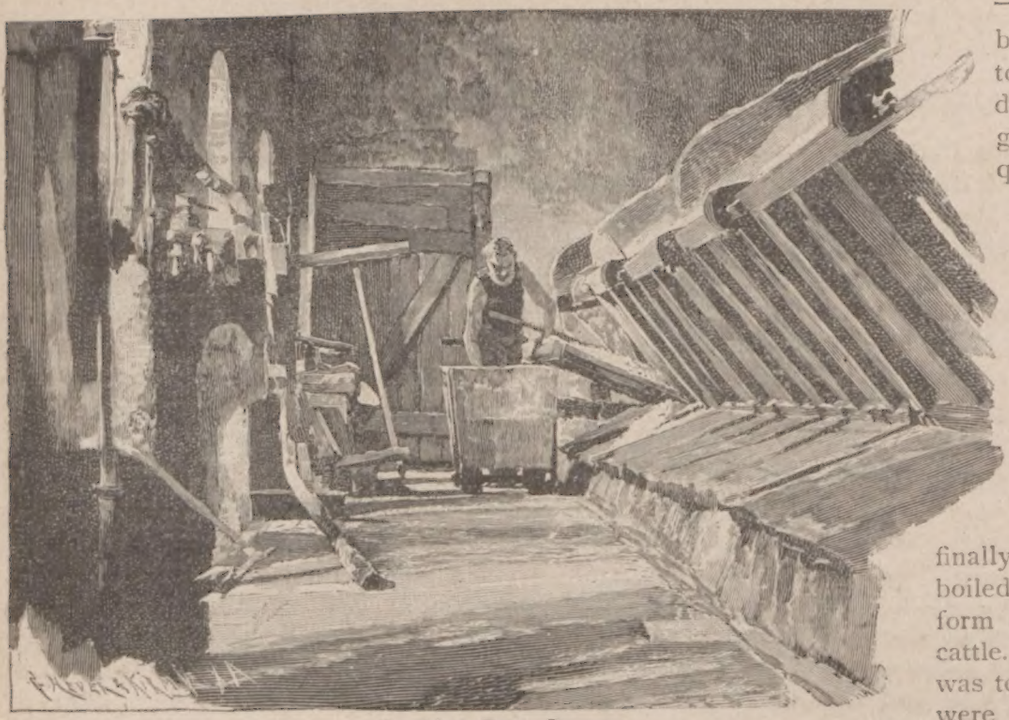
Spilling the salt is, in the opinion of many otherwise sane enough persons, still reckoned as unlucky as the ancient Romans deemed it. Leonardo da Vinci, in his "Lord's Supper," it may be remembered, distinguishes Judas Iscariot by representing his arm as upsetting the salt-cellar.

The phrase "to sit above the salt" brings to mind a host of quarrels that have arisen out of persons seating themselves higher up the table than they had any right to be; but the number of rows that is readily recollected must be but a small proportion of those that actually occurred.

There are many ways of obtaining salt. One is by evaporation from sea water, but the principal way is from rock-salt or brine springs. Rock salt is found in Hungary, in Germany, in the Pyrenees, in the Vosges, and in our own Cheshire. The largest salt mine is at Wieliczka, nine miles from Cracrow, in Galicia, and has been worked for more than 900 years. And now I am going to tell you about some salt mines which I visited last summer in Switzerland. They are up on the side of a steep mountain, above the little town of Bex, which is not far from the Lake of Geneva. Rock-salt was mined here 300 years ago. It was discovered in a very strange way. Goats, you must know, are particularly fond of salt, and some goats were observed going amongst the rocks and licking them with great delight. It was soon discovered that these rocks were full of salt, and so the mine was bored, and great quantities of rock-salt were found. The water that flows from these rocks is quite salt, much more salt than sea-water; in fact, no one would attempt to drink it.

It was a very sunny day when I and my two friends toiled up the steep hill that leads to the famous salt mine. The view, looking down on the valley of the Rhone, was beautiful and the grassy banks were full of flowers. We were told to make for a red house, and so we did. Outside we found a man in very blackened clothes. He asked us if we were going on the "grand course," as that would take two hours, and would cost us four shillings and threepence. We said "Yes," so he directed us to a shed, where an old woman took away our umbrellas, and gave us each a little oil-lamp to carry in our hand. Then

A Salt Worker.



In the Pan Room.

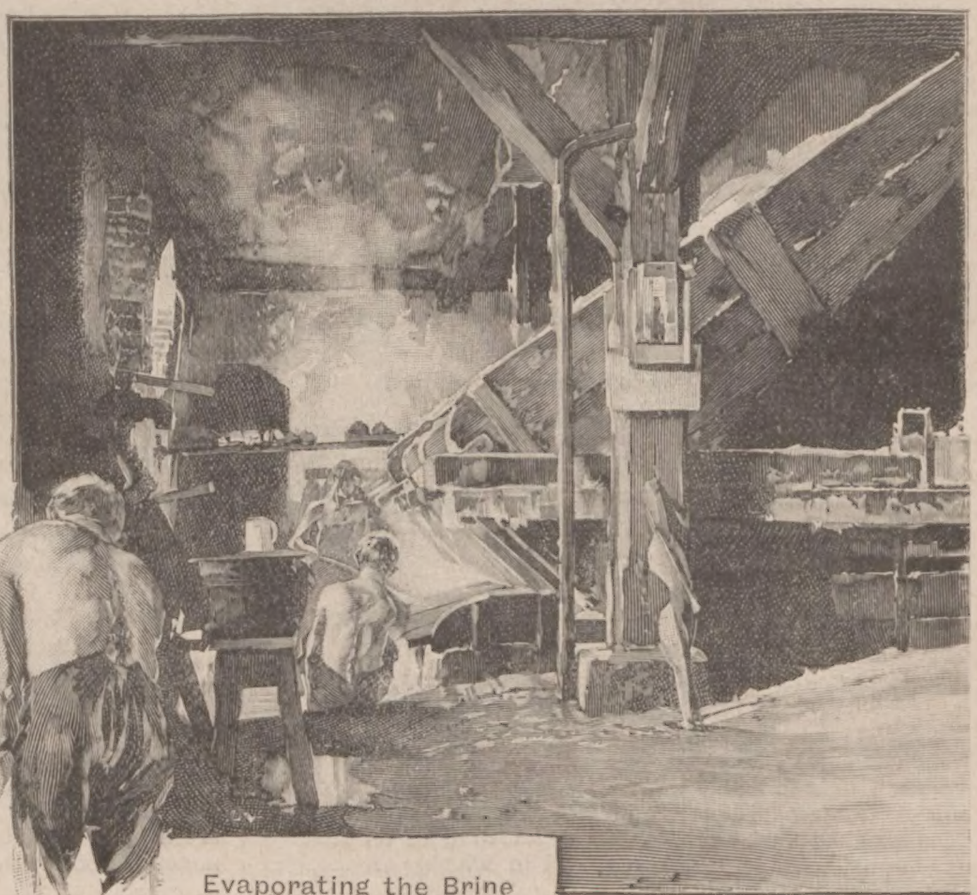
our guide led the way to a small opening in the rock; he plunged in, and we followed.

There was just room enough in this passage to stand upright, and planks were laid down to walk on. We went singly, one by one, with a solid rock on each side. It soon became perfectly dark, and we could not have gone on without our little lamps. Have you ever read Jules Verne's wonderful story, "To the Centre of the Earth"? It seemed just like that, as we went on and on through the dark, silent passages. Sometimes our guide stopped, and we looked down on one side and saw water! This is the salt water from the rocks, which is conveyed down to the valley in pipes. We saw no workmen—the water just oozes from the rock-salt into the pipes laid for it. Once or twice he showed us a spring spouting out from the solid rock; sometimes he led us up a little wooden staircase, and now and then we stood in a large, spacious, over-arching grotto. There are sulphur springs too in this mine. We could smell the sulphur a long way off, and we saw the water trickling down, and staining the rock a dark, rusty brown.

It took nearly an hour before we came to a wide, open space, and saw the date "1821" on the rock. This was the year when the staircase, which unites the lower with the upper mine, was completed. There were 750 steps to go up—very dark and steep. They were so very steep, it was like climbing a ladder, and they got steeper as we approached the end. Only fifty more, only twenty more, and at last we were at the top. We found ourselves in a sort of gallery with a vaulted roof. This was, I believe, the original mine, now joined to the lower one. After another dark passage, we came out into the glorious light of day, having been quite two hours in the mine.

A few days afterwards we went to see the salt works at Bex. Here the water from the mines, having been brought down, is converted into salt. There are large furnaces kept burning night and day. The salt water is put into huge boilers and steamed. In a short time the salt collects at the bottom; it is then taken out in shovels, sifted in a machine, and finally put into bags. The coarse salt is boiled, not steamed, and comes out in the form of crystals. It is used mostly for cattle. The atmosphere of the salt works was terribly hot and stifling; the workmen were naked to the waist, and somewhat thin. The men work very hard, and some are kept at it all night; so you see, there is a certain amount of trouble in getting salt, after all.

Before I finish my talk about salt, I may say that with the Eastern nations it is a sign of hospitality and goodwill. In some towns strangers are met at the gates with offerings of bread and salt. If the Arabians have been entertained by anybody, they refuse to injure him or speak against him, because they say they have "eaten of his salt." This is a very good rule for us, too; but we have a higher motive than they have, because we should follow our Great Example, and love even our enemies, hoping for nothing again.



Evaporating the Brine

OUR BEDROOMS.

BY MRS. RICHMOND, AUTHOR OF "PERILS BY FIRE," ETC.

WE do not always realise that a large part of our lives is spent in our bedrooms, which should, therefore, have special attention with regard to sanitary arrangements.

Yet in many houses (especially in cities) the bedroom accommodation is far inferior to that of the sitting-rooms. Too often the windows are blocked up, with walls at no great distance, while many are without a fireplace; gas, with its injurious effects on the health, being used to warm and dry them.

Warmth, sunshine, and pure air are absolute necessities for a healthy bedroom. Shut in as we are (without the constant movement of air which comes to the sitting-room through the opening of doors), fresh atmosphere, uncontaminated by the poisonous gases given out constantly through the lungs, and also the pores, is greatly needed at night; and for the want of this pure life-giving air, many of us suffer severely.

All the hangings in the bedroom should be washable. Work-house sheeting, edged with some pretty bright material, makes excellent short curtains for a window. The present fashion of having these only to cover the window is an improvement on the older style of curtains, which sweep the floor, and thus accumulate dust.

Bedrooms should not be overcrowded with furniture. Heavy carpets, which cannot easily be removed, are also a mistake. The modern square carpet is a distinct advantage, as it only covers the centre of the room; while the boards at the side are polished, and these should be wiped over daily, the carpet being constantly shaken in the open air.

The bed should be so placed that the full sunshine pours down upon it daily, for there is no disinfectant so powerful as King Sol, and only in this way (with widely-opened windows too) can the bedding be made thoroughly fresh after the night.

Many a housewife who is particular enough about the whiteness of her sheets, and the purity of her blankets, forgets that bedding (and especially pillows) needs to be often renewed, by turning the feathers (or hair) out of the ticking, airing them thoroughly in strong sunshine, and either supplying new covering for them, or having the covers washed.

Before the room is left in the morning, it is well to turn back the bed-clothing entirely, and no servant should be allowed to "make the beds" until the mattress has been thoroughly exposed to the fresh air, and, if possible, to the sunshine; the blankets being also well opened out, and the pillows placed near the window.

Ventilation of a thorough description must not be forgotten. If the window be not habitually left open at the top, night and day (as it should be), ventilators must be put in; and every morning, while the bedding is being aired, it will be well to let a thorough draught sweep through the room from door and window.

Warmth in winter must be supplied by a fire, on no account by gas or any kind of stove, for these exhaust and poison the atmosphere; while an open fire tends to purify it, by causing a sharp draught up the chimney.

Gas or paraffin-oil should never be allowed in a bedroom. Where electric light cannot be had, the old-fashioned candle is far better than the petroleum lamp, with its many dangers, and impurities.

In an ill-constructed bedroom, distempered walls (which are easily refreshed with the purifying lime of the wash) are more desirable than wall-paper, which attracts microbes, and (unless varnished) is not easy to cleanse; whilst polished furniture should be rubbed with linseed oil and salt (an excellent and purifying polish); and carpets will be the better for being wiped over with strong salt and water occasionally, for this cleanses them, destroys bacilli, and at the same time brightens their colours.

GOING TO SLEEP.

TWO tireless little feet all day have trotted
Across the parlour floors;
Two tiny, dimpled hands have slyly plotted
Mischief behind the doors!

Two magic crystal orbs, with watch unceasing,
Their glance on all have flung;
Two rose-bud lips, their merry chatter teasing,
In bird-like notes have sung.

Now, o'er those orbs the drowsy lids are closing,
Bidding adieu to light;
And lips, white head, and feet so still, reposing—
Have whispered their "Good-night."

O blessèd hour! when soft-winged sleep, descending,
Thus gives its sweet surcease
To toil-worn mortals—all their troubles ending
In sweet, oblivious peace.

For He who ever guides the sunlight's setting
And kindly veils the earth,
That deep repose may bring that self-forgetting
Prelude to newer birth—

Will ever guard the tender infant's slumber
And send His angel bands
The midnight watch and dawning hours to number
With star-tipped wands.

The Noblest Lives are not always those that are called into public view. In private life, there is the daily bearing of a burden that cannot be shared, the gnawing of an anxiety that is not to be communicated, and in which, perhaps, the hardest element to be borne is its essential solitariness. The meekness, the patience, the kindness, the constant sacrifice of self, the gentle expressions of a lovely and loving spirit, all these go to make up what we call the daily routine of an unnoticed life. Many a mother has a higher claim to veneration than the world's heroes.

A STRAIGHT TALK.

"HESTER!" exclaimed Aunt Susan, ceasing her rocking and knitting, and sitting up straight, "do you know what your husband will do when you are dead?"

"What do you mean?" was the startled reply.

"He will marry the sweetest-tempered girl he can find."

"Oh, auntie!" Hester began.

"Don't interrupt me until I've finished," said Aunt Susan, leaning back and taking up her knitting again. "She may not be as good a housekeeper as you are; but she will be good-natured."

"Why, auntie——"

"That isn't all," composedly continued Aunt Susan. "To-day your husband was half-way across the kitchen floor, bringing you the choicest of all his chrysanthemums, and all you did was to look on and say: 'There, Will, just see the mess you have made on my clean floor with your muddy boots!' Some men would have thrown the flowers out of the window. To-day you screwed up your face when he kissed you, because his moustache was damp, and said: 'I never want you to kiss me again.' When he empties anything, you tell him not to spill it; when he lifts anything, you tell him not to break it. From morning till night your sharp voice is heard complaining and fault-finding—never a word of pleased appreciation. And last winter when you were ill, you scolded him because the pump was frozen, and took no notice when he said, 'I was so anxious about you that I did not think of the pump.'"

"But, auntie——"

"Hearken, child. The strongest and most intelligent of men care more for a woman's tenderness than for anything else in the world; and without this the cleverest and most perfect housekeeper is sure to lose her husband's affection in time. There may be a few more men like Will—as gentle, as loving, as chivalrous, as forgetful of self, and so satisfied with loving that their affection will die a long, struggling death; but in most cases it takes but a few years of fretfulness and fault-finding to turn a husband's love into irritated indifference."

"But, auntie——"

"Yes, I know your reply. Well, you are not dead yet, and that sweet-natured woman has not been found; so you have time to become so serene and sweet that your husband can never imagine that there is a better-tempered woman in existence."

NOVEL NOTIONS.

A ROCKING CINDER BIN.

ECONOMY should be a speciality with all good housewives. And in these days of high-priced fuel, not a little sum may be saved by a judicious handling of coal. As a means to this, the cinder-sifting bin is worth attention. It will be seen that in construction it is fitted with rockers on the base, and contains a riddle inside. When the ashes are taken from the grate they are placed in the riddle, a conical cover is put on, and the bin is rocked to and fro by the aid of the handles. Thus the cinders can be sifted easily, and without any annoyance from dust.

A TOAST CRISPER.

ON cold days few articles for breakfast or tea are more welcome than nicely prepared toast. Not only is it very appetising, but it is said to be more nourishing than plain bread; while many an invalid favours a crisp crust in preference to more sumptuous fare. In fact, in few households are the possibilities of toast served either alone or with eggs and other delicacies duly recognised. But toast when left on the table is apt to become too soft for some tastes, and as crispness is desirable, the little device shown in our illustration has been brought out. The toast is put into the receptacle, which is kept heated by a lamp beneath. Moreover, the final crisping or "caramelising" of the toast can be effected in this simple way. We are assured that the apparatus answers its purpose wonderfully well.

*** Readers wishing for further information about the Rocking Cinder Bin and the Toast Crisper illustrated above, are invited to write to the Editor at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., enclosing a stamped envelope for reply.

A WORD TO WORKING-GIRLS' MOTHERS.

BY MARGARET MEREDITH.

POOR dear mothers, you have toiled and slaved for your children. My heart has ached for you times beyond number. Some of your girls are grown up now; and for them you begin to feel less burdened. They can earn their own clothes if need be, and pay their own way. To a large extent you can dismiss them from your mind.

But, tired, worn-out mother, they are looking out upon the world with far different eyes from yours. They are looking at it with the eyes that you had yourself in your girlhood.

Try to recall that day. You long now for quiet. You resent it that they want to keep the light burning in the front room through long evenings. You resent it that their boy friends linger on the steps talking, and even sometimes come in and sit down in spite of your scowls. It is all so tiresome. Is it not time for those girls to outgrow being a trouble to you? Is it not your right now at last to rest? You do so want to lock up after supper and be let alone.

What people long for they are only too apt to do; and perhaps many are so blind that they do not need to shut their eyes to the dangers that they are courting.

I made it a special mission to coax a bright, well-appearing young girl to stop flirting in the street. She seemed well disposed, though entirely ignorant of what was decorous: "I have to go into the town every night on errands; and when the men say, 'Hallo, Molly,' I just say, 'Hallo.' What harm is there in that?" Still, after I had drawn all the alarming pictures of which I was capable, notably the scorn which she would bring down on herself, before she knew it, of nice, desirable young men of her acquaintance who might have admired and sought her, she promised to desist from these entertaining practices.

Then I went and tried to enlist the aid of a good friend of hers, a young dressmaker; and she was eager to be of use. "But," she said during the talk, "what can we girls do? It is hard to work all day and never have any pleasure. Molly's mother wouldn't let a young man come to see her for anything. My mother is just the same. It puts her out if even a girl comes in, day or night, to chat for half an hour."

I should say it *was* hard. Poor mother! You want to hurry along the washing, or the husband's supper is to be got ready. There is always a rush. How can you be glad to spare Molly to chatter idly for a half-hour? How can you endure the crowding of noisy, silly simpletons in your little bit of a room? But you must endure it, or Molly is likely to go to ruin.

Having Molly on my mind, I started out on the war-path in a new direction. I went to her mother's pastor's wife, and begged her to show Molly's mother how important it was to change this state of things.

That pastor's wife is a sweet-natured woman, if one ever lived; but she said, "Those women do not seem to care for their children after they are grown up. Their only thought seems to be to get them out of the way."

I do not believe it. You do care for your grown-up children. But you are so hard worked. The care seems to insist on having your whole heart. It is easy to fall into habits like that. Why, we work so hard that we do not take time to long for the everlasting rest.

Without your knowing it you have shut out natural pleasures from your daughters, chiefly as a lazy way to save trouble; and yet I have heard you speak of it proudly. Few homes in our land carry it so far as one of which I heard the other day. A most respectable woman was describing to me how she was brought up, and her mother before her, and all the neighbours, and how it invariably worked. She was not allowed a sweetheart under any circumstances. Such a thing was simply not to be thought of. So her girlhood was one long succession of deceits and artifices to meet the lads of the neighbourhood after nightfall—long after nightfall generally, for both parents must be asleep—in the highways and byways near her cottage door. She and her worthy, excellent husband, so greatly esteemed in our church and town, had carried on their courtship in this way; and they were still able to laugh merrily at the memory of various escapes from detection. She said she "wondered" how, when James asked her parents for her, they supposed he had fallen in love with her, seeing, as they supposed, he had never met her at all or talked with her. Even more, she "wondered" how it was that, when her parents had had to carry on their own love-making in just this same way—their sisters and brothers and cousins had done the same—they dared to run such fearful risks for their own children. "My girls," she concluded, "shall understand, when they are old enough, that any honourable, straightforward young man who wants their society, and whose companionship they desire, is free to come and see them in their own home; and their father and I shall have the comfort of knowing that they are safe."

Have an understanding of this kind with your girls, too, you anxious, toiling mothers. Give them, if you can, a room where they may entertain the friends of whom you approve; or, if you have only a kitchen, let them sit there and be welcome and happy. It will not amuse you—far from it; but you will soon learn not to dislike it so much.

What is the use of wearing your fingers to the bone, and growing old and bent before your time, earning and suffering for these little girlies, if you are going to turn them out of doors into temptation now, and destroy their happiness and their love for you, and perhaps their whole future—time and eternity?

Those Questions.—If you do not know the proper answer to your child's question, say so at once, though it may be painful to do so. Better anything than tell your child a falsehood. We must be true to ourselves before we can rightly influence our children, who are so quick to detect deception in those whom they trust.

MRS. TOM.

BY M. B. MANWELL, AUTHOR OF "NOBLY PLANNED," ETC.

WHEN Tom Bathurst, of the Fir Tree Farm, singled out Elsie Barnes from the maidens of Chillingly village, and proceeded to woo her for his wife, people wondered where his eyes were.

Why, she was but a brown-skinned, under-sized chit, whom you would pass without seeing so much as a feature in her face. To be sure, when you came to look into that same cheery face you found out the secret of its brightness lay in the curving lines of the rather wide mouth, with its curling corners. Ah! those aspiring corners of the human mouth. The ancient Greeks knew, if we of to-day do not, that all the "sweetness and light" of this life lie in their upward curves—all the gloom and dourness in those other lines that droop persistently. But Tom Bathurst, for one, was far-seeing enough to know the owner of such a gracious mouth would be an incomparable life-companion.

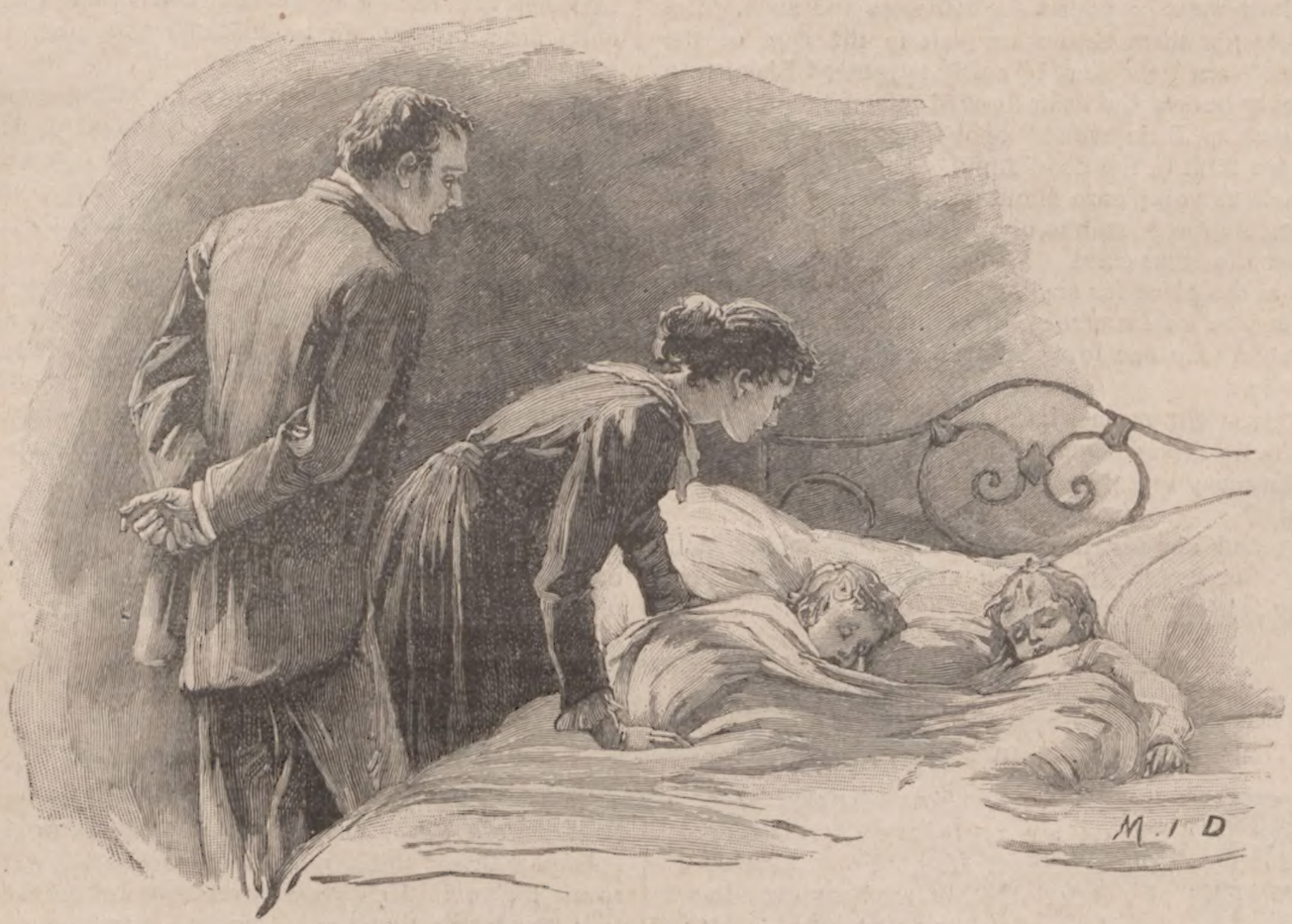
So they were married, Tom and Elsie; and old Mrs. Bathurst, a stern woman, with a strong dash of Calvinism in her grimly-cast nature, rose up and abdicated her seat at the head of the Fir Tree Farm household. Not that she went far, locating herself and her two daughters, who were cut out of the same web of human nature as their mother, in a comfortable red-brick house on Chillingly Green.

It was but natural that they should not go further afield—they and theirs belonging to the Chillingly soil much as did the oaks and elms around. Besides, there was Mrs. Tom at the farm. It was only right and proper to keep an unswerving eye on the new mistress. Sometimes Elsie felt bewildered, perhaps a little sore, at the strongly-put advice launched incessantly at herself.

"You're *so* young, you see," Mrs. Bathurst would say, and Elsie felt that the old lady invariably rounded off the "young" with "and so foolish."

"She'll mend that fault every hour!" said Tom, with a large, happy laugh. The young farmer knew why the days were suddenly so bright for himself, the old house so transformed.

But time went on, summer and winter, and the new mistress could do nothing right in the eyes of the old



"Beside little Tom lay the pale-faced stranger." *p.* 174.

—not even when she put the baby-boy, with Tom's blue eyes, in the unwilling arms of her mother-in-law.

"I don't hold with boys; they're so expensive to bring up," said the old lady, severely. "A girl would have been more to my mind!" And Mrs. Tom shrank away, her pride in her first-born shrivelled.

But not for long could even Mrs. Bathurst's disappointment and the girls' indifference gloom the joy of the young parents over their boy.

"I'm thankful he's a Bathurst to look *at*," said Elsie, proudly.

"I hope he's a Barnes to look *into*," laughed Tom.

It was late autumn of the next year. Little Tom was growing apace; he had made, on his own feet, the long journey from mother's arms to those of father, when a wonderful thing happened down at the red-brick house. A visitor—unexpected, unwelcome—arrived. It was a white-faced, tiny boy, with straight yellow locks, and frightened dark eyes.

Every home has its skeleton; that belonging to the Bathursts Elsie had never known the rights of—not even from Tom, who shrank from the subject. There had been a young sister of his who, frozen by the chill home atmosphere, had sought outside of it for happiness and love. Amy had run away. She was dead and buried in the eyes of her family from that moment. Even Tom could not forgive, though from time to time came beseeching letters, which were cast into the fire.

Then came a last missive from Amy—a human one—her motherless child. She was dead, and had died a widow.

"A widow!" scoffed the Bathursts. "Where's the proof?"

"There must be papers—certificates and such. Let us try to get them before we 'sit in the seat of the scornful' over poor Amy!" softly suggested Elsie, who had never known the ne'er-do-well young sister.

"Right so, little wife!" spoke up Tom, fired with new-born faith in the dead Amy.

"Well, as you please about such waste of time," said old Mrs. Bathurst, stubbornly. "But my roof is no fitting place for that child. I'll have none of him. The Union is the place for such."

There was a faint scream of horror from the motherly old woman who had brought her dead lodger's child to Chillingly.

"You're right, mother-in-law," said Mrs. Tom, quietly. "This is no fitting home for a child. If you like, I'll take him away myself to the Union—the union of love and pity."

Tom had already left the room, discomfited and uneasy. Presently Elsie left it also, the stranger-child sobbing fretfully in her arms.

By-and-by, when Tom and she went to kiss their own sleeping boy good-night, beside little Tom lay the pale-faced, straight-haired stranger.

"You won't object, Tom dear?" Elsie said, with pleading eyes and lips. "You remember who said of the little ones, 'Forbid them not'?"

"I remember!" gravely said Tom, "And, wife, neither shall you nor I 'forbid' this little one!".

* * * * *

It was only a month after when the truth came out to overwhelm old Mrs. Bathurst with remorseful shame. Those papers Mrs. Tom had suggested searching for proved that the companion of Amy's flight was the only son of the Squire of Chillingly, Sir Oliver Cust. Their marriage had been a secret one, and Frank Cust being soon after ordered off to India on active service, had been killed there.

When Sir Oliver found that he still possessed an heir to the old name, nothing was too good to show his gratitude to the true-hearted woman who had saved his grandson from the Union, nothing too severe to mark his abhorrence of the cruel heartlessness of Amy's mother.

It is years since their two little heads lay on the same pillow, but young Tom and young Oliver are fast friends, sharing all things, even their College education.

"But for Tom there would have been no Oliver!" says the Squire, as he turns his back persistently on old Mrs. Bathurst, who would fain undo her mistake.

And he is right.

When Mrs. Tom made room in her heart and her home for the orphan-waif, it was from the God-given instinct of true motherhood, an inheritance to a woman more priceless than, and "far above, rubies."

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

November 2nd, 1896.

HERE we are again, my dear friends, in the month of fogs. Poor November! I wonder whether anybody ever has a good word to say for him! Here's one, at any rate. Fogs may be disagreeable to the eyes, unpleasant to the nose, and trying to the temper, but—well, have you ever stopped to reflect when you were abusing English weather in general, and fogs in particular, that these very climatic influences must play a prominent part in the formation of our national character, fostering as they do the growth of pluck, perseverance, and patience, and a dogged determination to make the best of things?

Ceaseless sunshine, whether atmospheric, spiritual, or temporal, may be very delightful, but it is decidedly enervating, and does not in any way produce the mental or physical sinews which enable us to overcome difficulties and be jolly during the operation that we owe to showers and storms, fogs and frosts. Therefore, I say, we owe a lot to our Novembers.

Looking back over that paragraph, I see I've used about a dozen long words. Forgive me; I'll make up for it in the rest of my letter.

Poor "MRS. A.," I am sorry for you, as you will know before this. One thing you have to be thankful for—you have, I think, a kind and true friend, who wrote to me for you. I suppose it would be but poor comfort to remind you that your case is a very common one, poor soul! You would answer, perhaps,

> "That loss is common
> Doth not make my own less bitter;
> Rather more."

I expect that if we could take a mental census of all our readers who are running in double harness, we should find that ninety out of every hundred would gladly do the extra work if only they could run alone once more. Each married man and woman promised to take the partner for better and for worse, and the earnest ones amongst us do not try to blink the fact; what we do complain of is that we often have oceans of the worse, and only a few thin streams of the better. Now, I do not believe in telling lies to oneself or to anyone else. If this is "MRS. A.'S" case, what ought she to do? Put her trust in God; do her best for her husband and her children, and carry these words about in her heart: "If my pain is bearable, I must bear it; if it becomes intolerable, I shall not have to bear it long."

* * * *

"Do you approve of children being helped at home with their lessons?" asks "J. C." If I were a Quaker, I should answer, "That depends." It's so nice to be able to give an undecided answer sometimes, you know. In fact, I believe my face is changing owing to the number of times I have to make up my mind in reply to the many questions I get. There are certainly lines and furrows which would shelter any number of mustard and cress seeds. Now don't please write and ask me how I would plant them. Stop! I must return to poor "J. C." and give a sensible answer (if I can). I think that with the present system of teaching, it is most right and proper that some person at home should help the children to learn their lessons. I do not mean do them for them, but teach them how to learn each one in the best way. Care should be taken that the children are brought up to be *honest* in their work. The mere words, "Stop and think a minute," will often be enough. I consider it downright dishonest to do a child's lessons for him, but I think it is the duty of every mother, who can do it without neglecting her other duties, to help her child with them.

* * * *

"PEGGY," my friend, if you want to make your old black silk look nice, sponge it carefully with water which has been well coloured with washing blue.

* * * *

OUR PUZZLE PARAGRAPH.

"MRS. A.," to whom I referred above, wants the opinion of the other members of our Mothers' Council on this subject.

"MRS. A." has a neighbour who has made a fireplace out of doors, on her own premises, but so close to "MRS. A.'s" door and windows that the smoke often fills the rooms and soils her curtains. As "Mrs. A." lets a bedroom, this is doubly annoying. Mr. A., instead of sympathising with his wife, says she is unneighbourly and too particular. To make matters worse, Mr. A. is evidently under the influence of Mrs. B., and although his income is small, takes next door things which his wife has provided for their own children. What ought "Mrs. A." to do?

Answers should reach me by the 15th of the month, addressed to 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., and marked "Puzzle Paragraph" on the outside. A book valued at half a crown will be sent to the writer of the best solution of "MRS. A.'S" difficulty.

* * * *

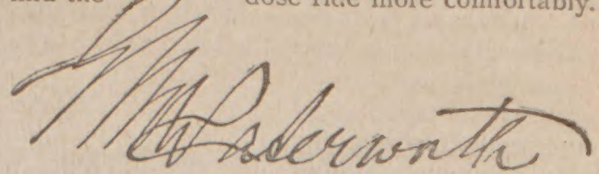
All careful housewives should make their Christmas puddings early in November. Don't you see why, "LEO"? You get the pick of the market in the matter of fruit and peel; you pay the usual rate for the suet, instead of Christmas prices; and your puddings improve by keeping. That reminds me, though I hope "LEO" will not think it is a reflection on her pudding, that boots and shoes also improve by keeping before they are worn.

* * * *

My dear "AGNES," don't you think you want a liver pill? Surely there is not anyone on the face of this earth who has not something to be thankful for? Do you know what I think is the matter with you, and with a good many other people who profess to love God? I believe I have said it before, but I will say it again, and keep on saying it as long as I have strength to speak and power to wield a pen. You want to understand more of the *beauty* of holiness. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to go about with tearful eyes and gloomy tongue and call yourself a Christian. Cheer up, don't look into your own life too much; look up to the grand life led by Him who is our Pattern. Don't shelter yourself behind your sensitiveness, which often is another word for ill-temper. "People always seem to be treading on your corns," do they? Isn't it often your fault for sprawling your feet all over the path to be trodden on? Think it over, and write again.

* * * *

"JESSIE" complains that in this cold weather saline draughts do not agree with her. Try adding a few drops of essence of ginger and sal-volatile, and I think you will find the dose ride more comfortably.



OVER-FONDNESS.

AN overplus of fondness is not an uncommon thing in some households. I do not refer to love in the real sense of the word, but to that abuse of love which oftentimes takes its place. Love with all its gentleness and tenderness is no weak and soft thing. But fondness is all softness. Fondness can, for instance, see no fault in another, simply because it will not. Fondness is for ever making favourites, and is full of eager gush and sentiment. It is well to make allowances wherever they can be made honestly, but fondness makes allowances where they can be made only dishonestly. It is the fond parents who spoil their children.

In reality, fondness is sheer selfishness, and is more concerned in the outflow of an emotion than in the permanent good of the ones concerned. A fond parent will never think of punishing a child because of the pain which punishment inflicts.

But there is an overplus of fondness in connection with the grown-up members of the family too. Husbands and wives should of course love each other dearly, but they should control themselves sufficiently to reduce a little the manifestations of their fondness. Some people do not.

For my part, I am somewhat afraid of the reality of all this public gush, and feel a little sceptical whether it is not a good deal put on. It is so easy for some people to assume virtues and graces which in reality they do not possess. But, whether real or not, there is nothing more offensive in a family than to have a public exhibition of such exclusive fondness.

Let them learn, I say, to modify their warm expressions, and at least to remember that such fondness looks supremely silly to those who are not within the charmed circle.—*Rev. Charles Courtenay, M.A.*

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

WINTER wraps must have a certain amount of consideration at this season of the year. Some of these consist of an under part which fits the figure by means of a skeleton upper part, to which a circular cape is secured at the neck. It is sometimes an advantage to have the cape unattached, so as to be able to wear it separately. The under part of the wrap buttons down the front. Others, and perhaps the more cosy mantles, are made to fit tight to the waist at the back and are half-fitting in front, either single or double-breasted, the latter usually buttoning down the side, after the style shown in illustration 37; while others, again, are fitted with a shaped yoke, to the lower edge of which the cloth is secured, being semi-fitted by an under-arm side piece. The back is arranged with a double box-pleat in the centre and the front, with a double box-pleat each side to meet in the centre, where it fastens invisibly with hooks. The neck of such coats is usually completed with a collar band and turn-down collar.

Fig. 37.

Three-quarter circular capes will still be worn, while the tight-fitting and also the sacque jacket will come in for their share of favour.

Dress skirts will remain plain, and bodices will be either coat-shaped opening over a waistcoat front or trimmed about the shoulders with a collar made separate in many cases from the dress. Silk or velvet is mostly used, and sequin trimmings are employed for the edges and seams. Most of the dress bodices are finished with a basque, some of which are cut quite circular, while others are fluted at the back and plain in front.

Braid will be largely used to ornament winter dresses, especially those made in tweeds in the tailor-made style. This is used round the hem of the skirt and also down the front seams, a braided waistcoat being worn with a skirt trimmed in this way. Ruffles and ribbons adorn the neck of both dresses and jackets as well as ties of cambric and lace; indeed, the tendency to add warmth to the neck which could be scarcely tolerated during the last two seasons can be taken to with advantage now, and we all know how a well-arranged, properly fitting neck gear adds to the effect of a dress body.

Fig. 38

Fig. 37. We have here the back and front view of a lady's mantle; the same design can also be used for elder girls. In choosing the cloth for a mantle of this kind, we would advise our readers not to get too heavy a material. Such materials are difficult to make up and uncomfortable to wear. Tweed or cheviot is more desirable than Melton cloth.

Fig. 39.

The back of the coat here illustrated fits tight to the waist, and the skirt part, which is cut separate, is secured and made neat by the band set in at the under-arm seam. The front is cut the entire length in one, and fastens at the side with large buttons. The hood gives a pretty finish when lined with fancy silk. Turned-down collar and cuffs can be of velvet or cloth.

Fig. 38. We have here a lady's dress made with tight-fitting sleeves such as are now coming into general use. The lining for this is coat-shaped, and the material is drawn the entire length and mounted over the lining, so that it sets close to the arm, although it has a certain amount of fulness. The shoulders are finished with a double full epaulette edged with sequin trimming. The bodice is quite plain, and can be made to fasten down the back or on the shoulder and under the arm. This latter plan is rather a difficult one for home dressmakers. Straps of velvet are set into the shoulder seams and brought to points just above the breast pleats. Ribbon bow at the back of the neck and pointed velvet waist-band.

Fig. 39. Most of our readers will be pleased with the neat, stylish-looking blouse shown here. Velveteen is employed. It is just eased into the neck over a fitting lining and also at the waist, breast-pleats being in the lining only. Three bands of coarse lace insertion give a good effect to the front of the bodice. The full bishop sleeve is used, the velvet being gathered both at the arm-hole and also into a four-inch cuff at the wrist.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 37, 38 and 39, 6½d. each, post free. Address "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

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